A LETTER TO Both HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

On the SUBJECT of their

PRESENT PROCEEDINGS

AGAINST THE

ROMAN CATHOLICKS OF ENGLAND.

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A Letter to both Houſes in Parliament, on the Subject of their preſent Proceedings againſt the Roman Catholicks of England.

May it pleaſe Your Lordſhips, and You Gentlemen of the Houſe of Commmons,

I Know the multitude of your affaires, and therefore this Interuption ſhall be no longer then ſeemeth neceſſary.

I hope that ſince by permiſſion of Authority, *Oates* (the preſent Infamy of our *Countrey*) has taken on him the office of Councellor, or rather *Tutor* to his *Majeſty* in the late publication, of his *Fantaſtick* Depoſitions, It will not be needful to *Appologize* for this little *Admonitory* Addreſs unto you.

I confeſs you now receive it from one ſingle hand but you muſt likewiſe be aſſured that it is the voice of the wohole *Chriſtian* World, which becauſe you ſtifle and ſuppreſs it in *England*, by moſt ſevere *Penalties*, your beſt Friends are obliged to impart it unto you from beyond *Sea*.

You have raiſed a moſt violent Perſecution againſt the *Roman Catholicks*: you have thrown many worthy *Gentlemen* into *Goales*, and conſtrained others to quit their Native *Countrey*; you have taken away the Lives of ſeveral honeſt Men, as well by ſtrict and uncharitable Impriſonments, as by pretence of Juſtice and form of Law, you have aſperſed the cleereſt and moſt unblemiſhed Reputations with the ſowleſt ſtaines, you have dreadfully Allarm'd, and inflamed the People, and in a moment changed a ſteady and fruitful peace

Peace into moſt reſtleſs and waſting diſtractions. And all this under colour of a Helliſh *Plot*, that was contrived, and is ſtill carryed on againſt his *Majeſties* Life. This you ſay is diſcovered to you by *Titus Oates*, and *William Bedloe*, and on their *Teſtimony* you have proceeded to ſo much oppreſſion and blood. And all this while you are not ignorant, what reputation your informers have, *(viz.)* That they are men who by *Cheats*, *Robberies*, and *Perjuries*, had long ſince, loſt all manner of Credit. And at this time were grown ſo indigent, that perhaps their wants had been a Temptation ſtrong enough to better Conſciences for ſuch an advantageous forgery. You know likewiſe that as their former faſe-hoods, and *Perjuries* were notorious, ſo even their preſent ones are manifeſt; And this not only by clouds of Witneſſes, both *Catholicks*, and *Proteſtants*, which notwithſtanding the care taken to prevent it by baniſhing the one, and frightning the other, do yet appear againſt them. But alſo *(* beſides other abſurdities *)* by plain diſagreements, & palpable contradictions in their own evidence. You know how differently this pretended Information hath bin given, and how *Protens* like it hath changed it's ſhape, being one thing before the Privy-council, another before you, a third before the Judges. You know how many groſs failings have bin obſerved in it; Not only by his *Majeſty*, but by many of your ſelves. You know that the beſt of your two Houſes Voted the *Queen* Innocent of ſuch crimes as theſe two Villaines were not afraid to ſwear againſt her which was no other in effect, then to declare the accuſation, a *Perjury*; you know that the *King* himſelf who is the moſt concern'd, and has had the beſt opportunities of Examining this mock diſcovery, openly laughs at it You know what *Proteſtations* of Innocency, your humble Victimes have all hitherto made at their

Deaths;

Deaths; which (becauſe you think few hearts hard enough to reſiſt ſo moving and convincing a Proof) all your Narratives of their *Executions* conceale, and your ordinary diſcourſes find out ſuch pitiful Evaſions, that even I am aſhamed to mention them, for how can any one believe, that *Catholicks* have diſpenſations to Atteſt lies (even to the profeſſing themſelves *Proteſtants* as was ſaid in *Bury*'s caſe) at their going out of the World, and being ready to appear before the dreadful and moſt exact *Tribunal* of Almighty God; when every body knows that in all ages ſince your reformation, ſome of them have loſt their Imployments, ſome their eſtates: others their Lives; for not taking your Oathes and Teſts, which ſuch Diſpenſations as you ſpeak of, would have made moſt eaſy for them to do, and conſequently have fruſtrated the effect of the penal Laws, and ſhelter'd them from the numerous and heavy perſecutions, which from time to time, have bin and are at preſent, moſt thickly ſhowred upon them; laſtly you cannot but ſee how highly Improbable it is, that there ſhould have bin an Army of Forty or Fifty Thouſand Conſpirators in readineſs, and yet on this diſcovery no other ſign or evidence ſhould appear of ſo great a thing, but the bare Aſſertion of one or two infamous *Rogues*; and you your ſelves ſo ſenſible hereof, that though on the account of a *Plot* you kill and ſlay, yet you ſeem ſo far diſſatisfied with any evidence you have of it hitherto, as ſtill to keep Faſts, and days of Humiliations, that God would help you to diſcover it farther, and what (I preſume) you hold the moſt efficatious way of augmenting the number of your diſcoveries, you are ready to free any *Raſcal* out of the vileſt priſon, who has wit enough to frame a little Tale on this Subject, Adding reward to his Liberty; and from beneath a *Begger*, raſing him to the *Port* and *Equipage*

of

of a Lord. What ſhall I ſay of all this, or rather what does the whole World ſay of it. But that you ſeem at once to have loſt all *Prudence*, Honeſty, and ſhame, there being nothing more *Imprudent*, then thus by countenancing *Perjury* and falſs-hood, to encourage the like (when occaſion ſhall give way) againſt your ſelves. Nothing more unjuſt then by form of Juſtice to wrong the Innocent. And laſtly nothing more ſhameleſs, then to act the moſt Ridiculous, Barbarous cruelties, on the *Theater* of the World, and in the view of all mankind are you not afraid, that not only *Chriſtians* for your violence to Chriſtianity, but even *Turks*, and *Infidels*, will unite againſt you, as the common enemy of humane Nature, and if your Pride lift you above thoſe feares are you not at leaſt apprehenſive of Divine vengeance? have you ſo ſoon forgot, in how many miſeries and what ſtrange Confuſions, our poor Nation was over whel'md, by heats far leſs then theſe? God Almighty 'tis true, as ſtrangely reſtored us back our Quiet and tranquility. But when he does any ſuch favour, as well to Nations as to particular perſons, he always adds a *Noli amplius peccare*, &c. Sin no more, leaſt a worſe thing happen unto thee. We are now begining to ſin again, and if we hold on the Courſe, what can we expect that this worſe thing which is to come upon us ſhould be but even the total ruine of our Countrey, and the extirpation of our people? I confeſs that ſome of you are ſo Ingenious as to acknowledge that the Accuſations againſt us are meer calumnies, and Improbable falſs hoods, but ſay you, we have need of them, what hath need of them, your property or your Religion? You will not ſay the firſt (becauſe ſuppoſing thoſe dangers real which ſome treacherouſly, feign and others as inconſiderately fear) you ought to have ſo much (not to ſay of Chriſtianity) but Gentility in you

as

as to uſe forgery, as little for the preſerving, as you would for the procuring an eſtate, and then certainly you will eaſily grant, that Religion muſt have leſs to do with any ſuch thing ſince for it to ſtand in need of Lies for its ſupport and maintenance is a ſtrong evidence that it proceeds from the Father of them, and is it ſelf a moſt dangerous Impoſtor. But the ſufferers are Prieſts, or at leaſt *Papiſts*, and though Innocent of the Crimes objected to them, yet the Prieſt-hood of the one being *Treaſon*, and the Religion of the other (if not in Law yet in our opinion) as Criminal, we for our parts cannot think but that they are wronged when (though on another ſcore) they are put to death, ſuch fancies as theſe are nothing elſe but flights, and artifices of our ſubtil Adverſary, wherewith he endeavours to quiet that remorſe of conſcience which commonly is felt, at the entrance of its wickedneſs. My deſign is not to inſiſt on the defence of our Religion: However give me leave to propoſe in few words to your conſideration, how inconſiſtent it is with your profeſſion and how unwarrantable by your own Principles to perſecute on that account, pray reflect on this *Dilemma*, either God Almighty hath left us ſome living guide, or guides, here on Earth, for the interpreting holy writ, and directing us in all other points of Religion, and under pain of Damnation, hath obliged us to follow the ſame, or elſe he hath left this task to each of us in particular, imparting, to us the authority of being our own guides, and freeing us from all neceſſity of ſubmiſſion to any other. The *Proteſtants* will deny the former, not only becauſe in order to their pretended Reformation, they aſſumed a Liberty (as every body knows) moſt oppoſit to the obligation of being guided by others, but becauſe on the ſame account they were forced, to aſſert that no guides on earth could be infallible

lible, and conſequently, there could be none whom God had indiſpenſably obliged us to obey: It being impoſſible God ſhould bind us to an obedience, which might poſſibly (our Director being fallible) engage us in error, and prove the cauſe of our Eternal Damnation It follows then that they muſt maintain the latter, *viz.* that (as Proteſtants ſay) we are not bound to pin our Faith on anothers ſleeve, But impoured by God Almighty to guide our ſelves: do you not perceive that in men of your Principles, there is not the leaſt excuſe for penalties on Religion? What are Diſſenters in Religion guilty of, but of preſuming to guide themſelves, and follow their own conſciences, which you confeſs is nothing elſe, but what they are authorized to do by God himſelf: So that really when you puniſh for Religion, you ſeem to deal no better with God Almighty, than often you do with his Majeſty, when ever in his preſence you correct that in his Miniſters, which you know is done not only by his approbation, but Command. I know not what Arts you may uſe to leſſen Monarchy here on earth: But, I hope you will allow, the King of Heaven to be abſolute. But after all, if you think, that their Religion deſerves death; in Gods name let them dye for it; they own their Religion, and you may eaſe your ſelves of Mr. *Oates* and Mr. *Bedloe*; and cry out with *Caiphas*, what need have we of further Witneſſes? It is not lawful, for you to murther their Reputations, alſo, by traducing thoſe who have no other Crime, but their Faith; as Incendiaries and Traitors. And though I ſhould grant you, (contrary to what your ſelves believe) that they have deſerved all this, and what ever elſe they ſuffer: It does not follow, that therefore it is lawful, for you to procure the puniſhment of their Crimes, by committing others. I believe

that

that many of you would Scruple to take a falſe Oath againſt them; and am confident that none of you would declare it lawful ſo to do. Now that other opiate for conſcience of pleaſing your ſelves: that the whole weight of Perjury lieth on *Oates & Bedloe*, is as frivilous and weak an excuſe, as what I have already mentioned. Are you not taught by reaſon, and the common Proverb, That the Concealer is as bad as the Theif? Whoſoever byeth ſtolen goods, knowing them to be ſuch, or conceals the Felon, involves himſelf in the Theft. Tis true, the Knights of the Poſt, are *Oates & Bedloe*: But you both purchaſe the falſe Oathes, and protect the Swearers. And I believe in the laſt day (for as much as concerns this matter) It will be more tolerable for *Oates & Bedloe*, than for you; ſince your Crime ſeems to be the ſame with theirs; yet their extream want, and moſt deſperate neceſſity, was a greater temptation, than any thing could be to you, who had no wants, but what your groundleſs apprehenſions framed to your ſelves. Nay, more than this, ſetting aſide Mr *Oates*, you not only are thoſe who countenance, but alſo have drawn on the reſt; laying baits for them, and with large promiſes, and as effectual performances, even forcing them to come to your *Lure*, and this to ſuch a degree that conſidering your rewards: A falſe Oath began to ſeem the moſt important peice of ſervice, which we could do for our Country. Some of you ſay, tis true, you do not believe all that *Oates & Bedloe* tell you, *viz.* the deſign of killing the King, *&c.* But you cry there is ſome what in it. I beſeech you then, let not, what is not in it be puniſhed, but what is, and when it appears by better Witneſſes than *Oates & Bedloe*, ſince either all is true, that they ſwear, or nothing can be gueſſed, much leſs credited on their Teſtimony. Will you becauſe they ſwear many great

things falſely againſt us: the more eaſily believe the leſs; whereas ſhould they to your knowledg be guilty of Perjury, but in one ſingle point, you ought in Laws Conſcience to admit of no part of their Evidence, but abſolutely to reject the whole: And if ſo, I preſume it will be hard for you to tell me, on what the belief of this ſomewhat you ſpeak of is grounded, unleſs, you ſeriouſly conſider thereof. And then then I am of opinion, that you will perceive it to have no other foundations ſave only, that through prejudice againſt *Roman Catholicks*, wherein you have been bred, and the hidden deſire which is ſtill nouriſhed in your hearts, of finding ſomewhat to reproach them with; and at the ſame time appeaſe theſe doubts which now and then perplex you about Religion; and to ſatisfie your Conſciences how little need there is of imbracing one ſo troubleſom in its exerciſe and (as matters go) ſo diſadvantageous in its Profeſſion, by repreſenting it altogether, as unholy and impious, as it is inconvenient. They are (I ſay) your prejudice, and your intereſt, which ſtrongly (though for the moſt part imperceptibly) byaſs and incline your minds, to theſe raſh Judgments, cauſing you to make concluſions, for which you have no reaſon; and ſhewing us how true the *Maxim* is, (whereof you ought to be aware) *viz. Quod volumus facile credimus.*

My Lords and Gentlemen, I treſpaſs on your Patience, and almoſt looſe my own: I hope you will attribute to the irregularity of grief, what exceſs ſoever this ſhort Diſcourſe may be guilty of. It grieves me here amongſt our Neighbour Nations, to ſee our credit (hardly yet whole of its late wounds) to bleed afreſh with ſuch violence, that already it ſeems paſt cure. It grieves me to ſee the Son almoſt fallen into thoſe hands

which

which already ſo lately were imbrewed in the Blood of the Father, and he himſelf (thanks to thoſe Papiſts you now pretend to conſpire againſt him) ſo narrowly eſcaped. And if the view of a Natural Father, being in the like peril, cauſed a dumb Son to break his ſilence, What wonder is it if the eminent dangers of our Common Fathers, yea of all our Brethren too, I mean all his Subjects, ſhould tranſport one who could ſpeak before, ſomewhat beyond the ordinary *Decorum*, and Formalities of Cuſtoms? the ſubſtance is in ſo much hazard, that for the ſaving thereof, tis no great matter if a Ceremony be now and then omitted, he were not to be blamed, who to ſave a drowning Prince, ſhould (without ſtaying to make reverence) readily pull him out of the Water by the Arms.

What ſhall I ſay more? I hope you will pardon me, and look after your ſelves: Be pleaſed to pauſe a little in the midſt of this furious Carrieer (though it be only to know how far you can maſter your ſelves) and look at leaſt whether it is that you are running ſo faſt: Say to your ſelves, let us conſider what the whole World is now ſaying to us? Let us examine how far theſe loud exclamations are reaſonable? They who thus cry unto us, are men as our ſelves, and we may be miſtaken as well as they. Let us then conſider our own intereſt and ſecurity, the honour of our Nation, our Allegiance to our Prince, and Duty to God Almighty, and ſee how far they are hurt by this monſtrous Authority which two or three Rogues have gotten amongſt us? Let us conſider whether ſince the Pillorys could not free us wholly from the Inconvenience of Perjuries, an incouragement of them will not increaſe their number to the ruine of our Commonwealth, and moſt deſervedly of our ſelves in particular: And why do we talk of Perjuries only, when there is neither Robbery, Sa-

cridedge, Murder, Firing of Houſes, nor any other Crime, (which according to the courſe we take) may not now be ſecurely committed, ſince all theſe things (when ever they happen) are laid on the Papiſts. And though the Authors ſhould have the ill fortune to be diſcovered, it is enough for them to ſay, that ſome Papiſt ſet them on work, and they are ſo far from puniſhment, that they are ſure of being rewarded. Neither let it eſcape our thoughts, what it is to ſhed innocent blood, how deeply it ſtains, how lowdly it cries, and how certainly it is heard; let us alſo weigh, whether it was that the ambition of a few, and the fooliſh credulity of many hurryd us by the late Rebellion; and whether or no (conſidering the poſture of our Neighbours) that preſent diſſentions are not like to have a worſe end. Let us in ſpight of paſſion, prejudice, and popular miſtakes, ſet ſtreight once more the ballance of Juſtice, afford free and impartial hearing to both ſides, weighing the quality and credibility, as well as the number of Witneſſes, boldly declare what we ſhall find on a ſincere enquiry, and in concluſion act accordingly. Let thoſe who are any ways moved either by their own ſerious reflection, or by this piece of paper (which perhaps one day will be produced againſt ſome with more Juſtice, then ſeveral Letters have of late been urged for the Evidence of a Conſpiration) take courage, God will aſſiſt thoſe who are throughly reſolved to be honeſt. *Darius* threw innocent *Daniel* into the Lions Den, for fear of thoſe who ſaid to him, *aut trade nobis Danielem, aut interficiemus te*, and yet the next day (*Daniels* ſafety, moſt probably having given him a greater confidence in God) he was not afraid to caſt all thoſe into the ſame Den with their Wives and Children, who but the day before had terrified him, even to the wronging of his Conſci-

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ence, and deſtroying his beſt Friends, and they who then threatned him, making him yield unto an impiety were conſequently his Maſters, as ſoon as he became reſolved to do Juſtice, dared not ſo much as to ſtir a finger againſt him.

My Lords and Gentlemen; there is a certain ſtrength in Honeſty, which nothing can vanquiſh. Vertue has not any oppoſite, but what is of the nature of the Devil, who is ſo eaſily overcome, that barely to reſiſt him, (as our Lord aſſures us) is to put him to flight. I beſeech the ſame Lord to take away theſe evil and malignant heats, which are amongſt you; and inſtead thereof to inſpire you with a zeal for Religion, which ſo eſſentially requireth an exact Juſtice, that in truth tis nothing elſe; and therefore you find throughout the Scripture, that Juſtice or (as you tranſlate) Righteouſneſs and the Service of God, (*viz.* Religion) are terms equivalent, and if ſo; I hope the earneſtneſs that I have here ſhewn for Juſtice, which is ſo neceſſary a qualification for one of Gods Servants, will not cauſe me to ſeem the leſs,

Paris, June 17. 27.

1679

My Lords and Gentlemen,

Your moſt Faithful

and moſt Humble

Servant,

E. P. E.P.

A POSTSCRIPT to the House of Commons.

Gentlemen,

SInce the above written, we are told of ſeveral ſtrange Votes lately paſſed your Houſe, wherein (whilſt we thought that there could be nothing more wonderful than what we had already heard of you) wherein we are made to ſee, that you, at leaſt, can outdo your ſelves; One of your Votes (want of time, compelling me to leave the reſt for another opertunity) is to this purpoſe,

That in caſe his Majeſty (which God forbid) ſhould come to any violent Death; you will (at all adventures) charge the *Catholicks* with the Treaſon, and revenge it on their whole body in *England*.

I beſeech you Gentlemen, what other Comment can be made of this Loyal Reſult of your Deliberations; but that in effect it is to ſecure any one who is not Papiſt, to kill the King; by telling him before hand, that his Crime ſhall be laid on others: and the world is of opinion, (which God in his mercy prevent) by this Vote ſome of you deſign nothing elſe, but to make the way eaſier to that abominable Fact; which you pretend to hinder, and alſo to prepare and teach the People how to reſent it, when it is done: I muſt confeſs that your Vote would have been juſt enough, had none but Papiſts been capable of ſuch a Villany. And had all the Proteſtants, quitting the claim of being infallible in their general body, made themſelves impeccable in their particuler Perſons, or had it been neceſſary, that whatſoever ſome one or more of Papiſts ſhould act; their whole Communion ſhould have contrived or approved; But the Caſe is quite different: we have ſeen by experience, that in *England*, the *Catholicks*

licks are so far from being the only Enemies to the life of their King; that there was so great a multitude of those Enemies amongst the Protestants, that they were strong enough to destroy it; when the opposite Party though assisted by the Catholicks, was not able to defend it: Is it not an absurd case, to be considered, that poor Catholicks, who so unanimously, and gallantly hazarded their lives for that of their Prince, and are alwaies ready to do the same; should now (right or wrong) be marked out for the only Sufferers, if ever (which God forbid) their Prince should happen to be kill'd, when there are still so many of the Old *Regicides* not only alive, but in Vogue and Authority, and so many more of their Sons, who have double portions of their Fathers Spirits. How many over-heated *Presbyterians*, *Fift-Monarchy-men*, and other *Fanaticks* are there in *England*, who have conveniences fit enough for such an exploit; and with wresting a Text or two in Scripture, are able to perform ten times more, than what you pretend the *Papists* do with Dispensations from the *Pope*? You may perceive by the late Barbarous Murther of your *Primate* of *Scotland*; what regard they have to your most Sacred Dignities. And here give me leave to tell you, that it is more than highly probable, that these *Scottish* Gospel Branches were encouraged to such a horrid Fact, by the present Mode (which proceeded your Vote) of casting all things of this nature on the *Papists*; and I know not but ere now, they may have found a trick, of throwing this also upon their shoulders, in imitation of what was most inhumanly done, on the accident of Justice *Godfrey*'s Death, wherein they not only lost the benefit of a very good friend, but were supposed most unreasonably, and without the least hope of, or their advantage to have murthered him themselves. Who can apprehend, that the whole Body

dy of *Catholicks*, who are in Jeopardy of having their Throats cut, on every leſs murder that happens, ſhould contrive, or agree to ſuch an attempt againſt his Majeſty, which ſhould it come to paſs, by unknown Authors, would (whatever you are pleaſed to note) expoſe them to the danger of being torn in pieces by the Rabble; which is truly to be feared, is that ſome, *ex vobis ipſis*, infected with the Old Itch, as well of Plunder as of Domineering, ſhould uſe meanes (eſpecially, ſhould your claim to omnipotency, urge you to think of diſinheriting the Heir apparent) to aſſaſſinate the King, and thereupou maſſacre and ſpoil the *Papiſts*, and then ſet up their beloved Twins, *Preſbytery* and a *Common wealth*, wherein (if God interpoſeth not) you will effectually accompliſh, what you falſely pretended, the *Catholicks* heve deſigned, *viz.* the Murther of the King, the Change of the Governmnet, and the Subverſion of the Proteſtant Religion: And then perhaps many who were bigg with this feigned Plot, and expected great exaltations from it, will find their miſtake, and perceive, that the Young Viper has eaten through wherein it was conceived. And amongſt others, let my Lords the Biſhops (ſome of whom on pretence of enſuring their Goſpel, thought fit to preach up *Oates and Bedloe*) conſider that thoſe Aſſaſſinates of *Scotland*, are only the extream parts (*viz.* the Nails and Claws) of that great body, who though they now Break-faſt on us, will not fail to dine on their Lordſhips, and ſo (that they may have ſome what to think of, as well as the reſt) fat themſelves up likewiſe for them, whom God in his juſt Anger ſhall appoint to devour them,

Diſcite Juſtitiam moniti.

FINIS.